

SAW MILL RIVER

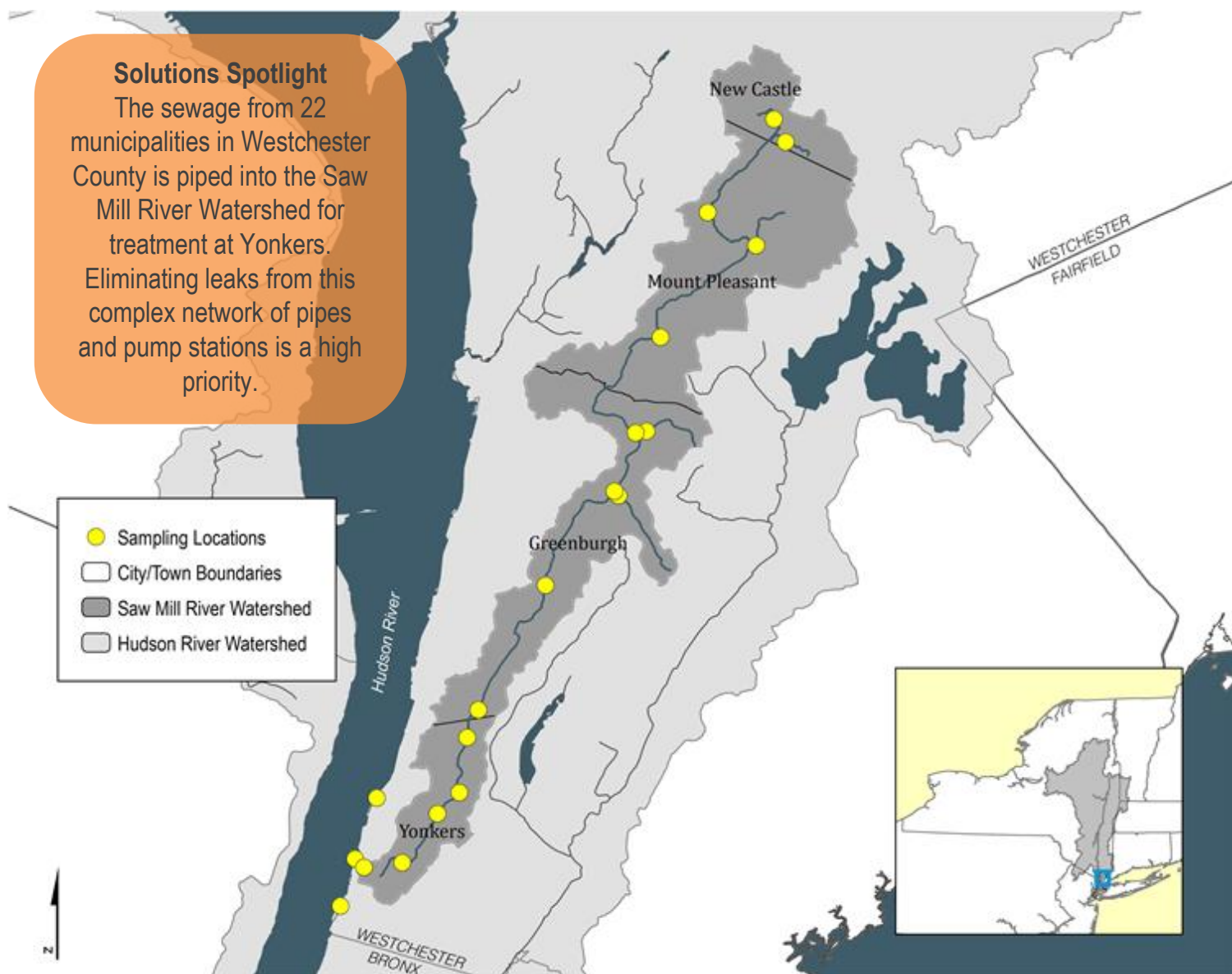
Community Water Quality Monitoring Results

2015-2021

Solutions Spotlight

The sewage from 22 municipalities in Westchester County is piped into the Saw Mill River Watershed for treatment at Yonkers.

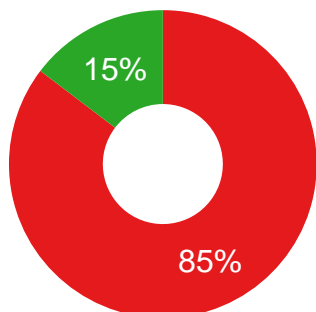
Eliminating leaks from this complex network of pipes and pump stations is a high priority.



What the Data Show

What portion of samples were safe for swimming?

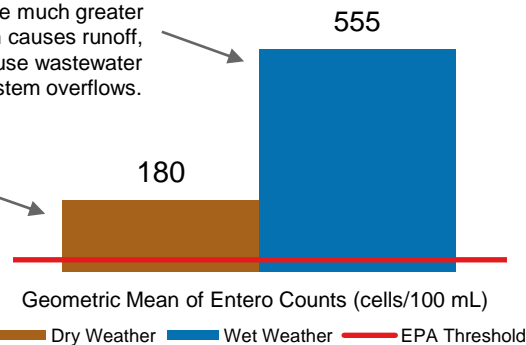
Most samples exceeded the EPA guideline for safe swimming.



How high were the bacteria levels?

Bacteria levels are much greater after rainfall, which causes runoff, and can cause wastewater system overflows.

Even in dry weather, levels exceed the safe swimming threshold.



More: Explore a watershed map, data from each sampling site, year-to-year patterns and other info at www.riverkeeper.org/water-quality/citizen-data/saw-mill-river.

Community Science

The water quality data presented here are based on an analysis of 1181 samples collected since 2015 by community scientists. (No samples were collected in 2020.) Samples are collected twice per month from May to October and processed by the Sarah Lawrence College Center for the Urban River at Beczak. To get involved, contact Katie Lamboy at klamboy@sarahlawrence.edu.

Why We Measure Bacteria

Fecal indicator bacteria such as *Enterococcus* (“Enterococcus”) usually do not make us sick. But because they live in the guts of warm-blooded animals, when these bacteria are present in water, pathogens that can make us sick may also be present.

Sources of fecal bacteria may include sewer overflows and failures, inade-

quate sewage treatment, urban or farm runoff, septic system failures, wildlife and contaminated sediment.

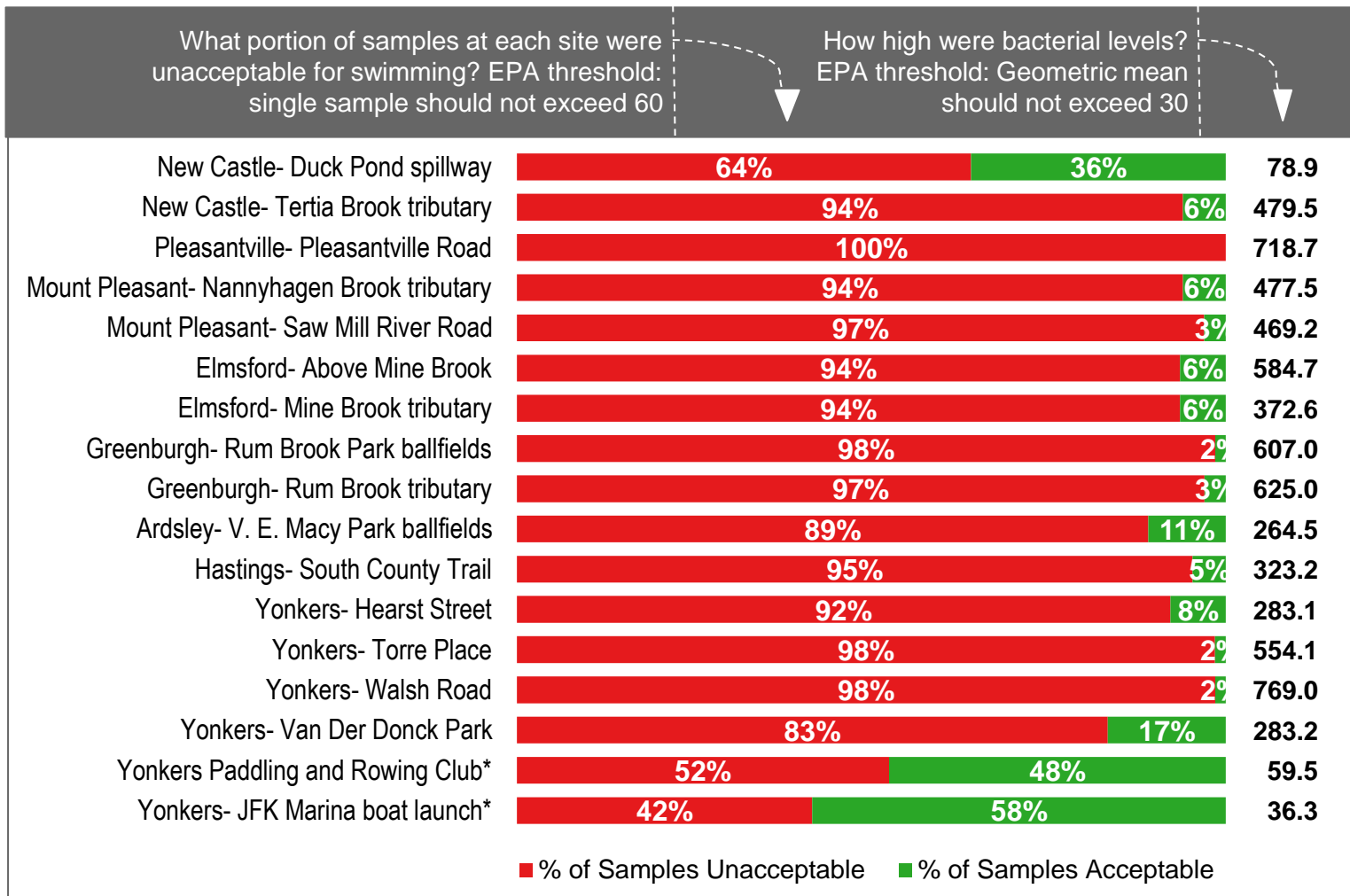
While research continues, the EPA has set thresholds to define if water is safe for swimming based on decades of science relying on measurements of these bacteria. Data are shown in Enterococcus cells per 100 mL.

A Little About the Saw Mill

No, it’s not just a parkway! The Saw Mill River flows more than 20 miles from Chappaqua to Yonkers. The river has been extensively disturbed to make way for transportation and wastewater infrastructure, and for flood control.

Signs of Progress

Through a grant from the Westchester Community Foundation, CURB recently completed a comprehensive water quality assessment of the Saw Mill River watershed. The information will provide much-needed updates to the state’s water quality assessments, which are the basis for many water quality improvement programs and grants.



*These Hudson River sites were sampled weekly in 2015-2016, twice monthly beginning in 2017.